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Poor Sailors of the English Navy;

Kept out of their P A Y, upon pretence of Q's and R's :

Humbly Address'd to the Honourable House of Commons.

IT is the Misfortune of the poor Sailors of the English-Navy, to have few or no Friends to take their Part, or represent their Grievances to the Parliament in order to have them Redress'd: Justice indeed carries an equal Ballance but both the Scales hang over the Earth, without any respect to the Sea, Tho' our Sailors are as true to their Country as the Needle of their Compass is to the Course they Steer, as faithful as the Steel to the Loadstone; yet are they little minded, by those in whose Power it is to do them Justice, as if their Generation were Monstrous, because their lives are Amphibious; they are born on the Land, and do Service on the Water, yet have they common Justice on neither: They are *English-men* but till they are 16 or 18 years of Age, and then arriv'd to the *Ne plus ultra* of their Liberty, their Freedom being in perpetual danger, liable to be invaded by every Press-Master; and those which were born to the Rights and Immunities of *English-men*, have all their Propertys knock'd on the Head at once, and are hawl'd away and constrain'd on Board-Ship, in an Honourable sort of Vassalage. Thus Wives have their Husbands torn from their Arms, Mothers the only hopes of their Families forc'd into Confinement more durable and uneasy than that of their Wombs, Fathers and Sons are Imprisoned in one wooden Goal. But were this all, the Bondage would seem more easie; the Mariners never think their Service to their Country too much, they plough the wide Ocean, contend with the raging Billows of the Deep, and with a Bravery peculiar to the Sons of the Sea, meet and fight their Enemy with a wonderful Contentment and Alacrity, in Defence of their Country, and those Rights and Privileges of which they have so small a share. Indeed their Country has not been backward in making a generous Allowance, suitable to the bravery of Men engag'd in such dangerous Enterprizes; but their ill Stars have laid them under such dismal Circumstances, under such a monstrous and unparalleld Conduct, that in the midst of the Plenty provided for them, they have been in the greatest Wants. It is commonly observ'd in Dealings amongst Mankind, that the Service of Labourers require present Money, and the Laws of the Realm have a great respect to the Wages of Servants, allowing them to be first paid, even before Bonds, or any previous Obligations of a contrary Nature: But some would

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have every Sailor an *Exlex*, and would make us believe that the same *decorum* of Justice, is not to be us'd in States and Governments, as is practis'd amongst Men of inferiour Ranks and Qualities. However, as the Debts to the Sailors are National, it ought to be a National Concern; and Grievances of this kind being Unredress'd, may procure a National Judgment.

That the *Q's* and *R's* upon the Navy-Books, are a comon Grievance, the poor Widows of Sailors, and their Attorneys, will loudly justifie, to their great Grief and Loss.

The *R* upon the Navy-Books is an immoveable Letter, very significant of Injustice, and serves there as a Period in other Books, putting a full stop to the Sailors Pay; and tho' the Person that puts the permanent *R* may be but a Cypher himself in the account of Justice and true Worth, yet his Letter *R*, is productive of vast Sums of Money, into the Pocket of some Body or other, to the Ruin of the Seamen. This *R*, in Navy Language or Character (which you please) signifies *Run*, and this *Run* is of different Meaning and Signification too, it is Crambo'd and tortur'd most damnably, forc'd to expresse the meaning of any thing the Commanders of the Navy please.

If a poor Man be set sick a Shore, so that he cannot get a-board his Ship before the Sails, then he is made *Run* upon the Books: If he be a Shore by the Captains Order, about the Ships Business, and some Orders from Above force the Ship out of Harbour before he can get a-board, the Ship runs away from him, and he from the Ship at the same Time: If he go immediately on Board another Ship, yet he is *Run* still. The immovable *R*, of the Navy, is as fixt as the Law of the *Medes* and *Persians*. If he make Interest at the Admiralty to get the *R* taken off. (for 'tis in the Power of those Men you know to do mighty Wonders) then his Petition comes out with this pretty Device at the bottom, read the 11th of *February*; refus'd, *J. Burchett*.

But farther to discover the meaning of this significant Letter *R*, I shall give an Account how it is apply'd to the poor Sailors upon the Navy-Books.

I. Such as never design'd to desert the Service, but being return'd from long Voyages, and their Ships being either in Port or Dock, have adventur'd to visit their Friends, in order to provide themselves with Apparel and other Necessaries, and perhaps have met with Press-Gangs belonging to other Ships, and forc'd on Board; this has been esteem'd by the Navy a Desertion, and they have made such Sailors *Run*, upon their Books.

II. Those that have been turn'd over from one Ship to another, and after having serv'd some time in the latter, their Tickets for their Service in the former Ships have been deliver'd them, and after having serv'd on Board several other Ships, perhaps two or three Years, after being set sick on Shore, the first Tickets with the rest, have been made *Quari'd* or *Run*, and their Wages forfeited.

Now, that such Practices as these are contrary to all the Law, Justice, and Reason in the World, is demonstrable.

I. Such as have their Tickets given them, are supposed to be guilty of no Crime at that juncture; and such Tickets are, and have been esteem'd as the King's Bonds and Bills of Exchange, and were formerly Paid upon sight. Now, it is very hard, that a Sailor transgressing in one Ship, should become so guilty, as by that Crime to forfeit all his Wages in former Ships: So that good service and bad, according to Navy Justice, are alike punishable.

II. Many well-affected People to his Majesties Service, and out of Charity to their distressed Neighbours, have supplied many Sailors with Money, to the full

full value of their Tickets, and when they come to the Navy to be paid, receive nothing but an *R* for their Money.

III. The *Quarrying* and *Running* of such Tickets, have abominably lessen'd the Navy in respect of Wages, and made the most Glorious Navy in the World the most Scandalous, by such barbarous Abuses; insomuch that Tickets formerly sold at 2s. 6d. per Pound, are now sold for Seven, Eight, Ten, and Twelve Shillings loss per pound.

The next thing to be consider'd is the Letter *Q*. upon the Navy Books, which stands there as near Injustice, as it does to the Letter *R* in the Alphabet. This *Q* is generally put upon such as are set Sick a Shoar: And then the poor Sailor is to *quarry* for Justice, which he may do till he is blind and never find it. That this practise is Barbarous and Inhuman, is very evident.

I. It sinks the Labourers Hire into Private Pockets, deprives distressed Families of their Bread, purchased by the hazard of Human Life, and brings unnecessary Charge upon Parishes.

II. This *Q* is a new Letter in the Navy Books, *Queries* being never heard of till the year 1690, before which time, every Man set sick ashoar, had his Wages paid him, and was discharged from the Service,

III. The great Sicknesses which at and since that time happen'd in the Fleet, was the Foundation of these *Queries*; a very hard case, that a Saylor must lose his Money because he has lost his Health in the Service; must have bad Pay because he has been poisoned with bad Provisions.

IV. Many, if not most of those, who have been set Sick a shoar, have thought themselves Discharged, according to former Custom, being altogether ignorant of the new Practise of the Navy.

V. Many that have been long Voyages, and being Sick for many months together, seeing the major part of the Ships Crew were bury'd, have been thereby disheartned to go a-board Ship again, Diseases being more dreadful to Saylor than Battle or Storm.

VI. Nor can it be rationally expected, that such as have contracted Indispositions and Distempers, by unwholsome Provisions, or a contagious Air, should (after a Months Refreshment in Sick Quarters, or labouring 6 or 12 Months under their Maladies, in an Hospital) can be fit to return aboard Ship, or be capable of doing his Majesty Service; but the contrary is evident, by the vast numbers that died soon after their return on Board, as well as those that were set Sick on shoar.

And wou'd it not now be just to pay such Men their Wages? Wou'd it not be for the Honour of His Majesty, for the Reputation and Credit of the Navy, to consider their Cases, and pay the Debts due from the Nation to such Saylor?

1. *As have been set Sick on Shoar since the conclusion of the Peace.*
2. *To the Executors and Attorneys of such as died in Sick Quarters, Hospitals, or Hospital Ships.*
3. *To such as after Recovery have entred on Board any of his Majesties Ships.*
4. *To such as have been wounded or hurt, and receiv'd Pensions, or Smart-Money for the same.*
5. *To such as continued six Months, or upwards, in Sick Quarters or Hospitals, or have been discharged from thence as Incurable.*
6. *To such as the Captains of Ships have discharged by Tickets, as unserviceable, as being either Sick, Lame or Blind, &c.*



To such as are made Run upon Ships wherein they have served faithfully, and have Tickets given them for such Service; it being sufficient, that the Wages be only forfeited in such Ships wherein they became Delinquents and actually run away.

This Usage of Free-born Englishmen, might move Compassion in any but in those whose Business it is to Cheat them, and raise their own Fortunes out of their Ruins. This indeed is a miserable Scene of human Cruelty, unknown to the Heathen Nations, and yet practised in a Christian Country, built on the Pillars of good and wholsom Laws, and under a Government set up for no other reason that I know, but on purpose to destroy such Arbitrary Proceedings, and to dispence common Justice to all Men. There is little more difference betwixt a Gally-Slave and an English Saylor, than that one serves in expectation of Pay, and the other without it; yet one is sometimes as well paid as the other. This barbarous Usage of Mariners, have made them instead of deserting our Ships of War only, and taking Merchants Service, forsake their Country, and Sail with Foreigners, in hopes of better Justice and Usage abroad than they have met with at home. This barbarous Usage has made many Thousands of them turn Pyrates during the last War; and those that turn Free-booters are generally the Flower and Youth of the Seamen; so that in time our Ships shall be Man'd only with decrepid old Age, and the refuse of the Sea, to the weakning of the Nation and Government; for every Sailor lost is a Stone taken out of our National Walls, which suffering such continual Dilapidations, will at last tumble down, and leave us exposed to the Insults of any Invader.

And after all, Pray what is become of the Money that was ordered to pay the Seamen, upon whom the *R's* and *Q's* have been put? If it remains still in the King's Hands, there is yet some hopes of relief left to the miserable Sailors; but if it be otherwise disposed of, their Disease seems Incurable. When we look into the Pay-Office and see there some Clerks at *30l. per Annum* purchasing Estates, others turning Merchants, and employing vast Sums of Money in Trade, we may give a shrewd Guess what is become of the poor Sailors Money. And how shall their Creditors be paid? How shall their Widows and numerous Fatherless Children be provided for? Will not the charge to the several Parishes, upon this account, be heavier upon the Subject than the Taxes during the War.

The Hardships of the Saylor during the late War, by being fed with Bread made of Pease and Horse-Beans, instead of Wheat, when our Country allow'd them all Species of provisions good in their kind, is not inconsiderable; when by their ill Usage several Persons got great Estates out of the Saylor's Bellies; but to be kept out of their Pay into the bargain, is intolerable.

Still they Groan under the same Misfortunes, they labour under the same Grievances, and expect no Relief but from this Honourable House.

They desire no more than the common Rights and Freedoms of the good People of *England*, and to be freed from an *Oppressive Power of Admiralty*; and that they may have but the same Privilege with the menial Servants of the Kingdom, in the Recovery of their Wages. If the miserable Condition of distressed Families exposed to the greatest wants; if their starving Wives and Families now ready to perish, merely for their Services to their Country, will not move Compassion let the present Juncture of Affairs, the Interest of Religion, the Safety of *Europe*, the Preservation of *England*, of your own Estates, your Wives and Families, now in danger, move this Honourable House to the Consideration of Their Deplorable Circumstances.

All which is submitted, &c.